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LABORATORY EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLANNING

LABORATORY ASSESSMENT DOCUMENT

Introduction: Before a laboratory can develop an effective plan for responding to emergencies, the laboratory's current capabilities must be determined. This would include both diagnostic and patient support testing capabilities and capacity. An in-depth assessment can be a valuable tool for the lab to use in advancing its emergency response preparations. Because the clinical laboratory will often be the first line of response during diverse community emergency events, the laboratory should consider an "All-Hazards Plan" approach to planning. ***An All-Hazards response plan should include procedures for sampling, analysis or referral, and reporting for biological, chemical, and radiological testing of clinical samples.*** The plan can also be adapted for responding to other events that might assail a community, including natural and accidental disasters.

Purpose: To establish a current capability (testing/technology/staff skills) and capacity (workload/number of staff) assessment of the laboratory that can be used to develop a realistic All-Hazards emergency response plan.

Capability: What testing procedures do you provide on site?

- Main laboratory (by testing specialty)
- Satellite Laboratory (in-house) (by testing specialty)
- Satellite Laboratory (off-site) (by testing specialty)

Capacity: How many specimens, by testing procedure, can you process in a routine 24 hours? Is there a difference in capacity on a normal weekday verses a weekend?

- Main laboratory
- Satellite laboratory(ies)

Laboratory Workforce: Number of employees and a skill inventory for those employees.

Sampling, Transport and Receipt: Include who receives samples, how they are transported to the laboratory, whether samples are received from outside sources like medical clinics or off site satellite laboratories. Include the sample accessioning process.

Biological/Chemical/Radiological Safety Level: Include information about the physical plant, equipment, and personal protection devices.

- Main laboratory
- Satellite laboratory(ies)

Result Reporting: To physician, to infection control, to public health or emergency management, include information technology (computer) capabilities.

Information retrieval: Technology information, shipping and handling guidelines, etc. Include how you retrieve information from journals, the Internet, etc.

Support Services: Supply inventory and ordering, waste disposal, clerical support such as record creation and update, etc.

Outside Laboratory Support: Include test turn around time and reporting processes.

- Reference Laboratory
- Missouri State Public Health Laboratory
- Mutual Aid Agreements (other local laboratories)

Facility Infrastructure: Include heat, air conditioning, water, communication system(s), equipment on emergency power, security for the facility and the laboratory, etc.

Existing Laboratory Emergency Response Plan: What plan the laboratory already has, and what types of hazards/emergencies are covered.

Hospital/Facility Emergency Plan: Determine the laboratory's role and responsibilities in the current hospital or facility plan.